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Do These Bears Still Need Help?



ARTICLE



AP Photo/Yellowstone
National Park, James Peaco



HELENA, Montana (Achieve3000, April 5, 2007). The federal government says that grizzly bears in and around [Yellowstone National Park](#) no longer need protection under the Endangered Species Act.

The delisting, which was confirmed in March and will take effect later this year, applies to the grizzly bears around the park in the states of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. The species will remain protected in other parts of these states; Alaska, where grizzlies were never threatened, is the only other place where they live in the wild.

Officials said that the grizzly population around Yellowstone has grown considerably since 1975, when the government placed protections on the species. Thirty-two years ago, officials estimated that there were between 136 and 312 grizzly bears around Yellowstone; today, the population has grown to over 500. According to Deputy Interior Secretary Lynn Scarlett, the protections are no longer necessary, because the population is now large enough to sustain itself.

"The grizzly is a large [predator](#) that requires a great deal of space, and conserving such animals is a challenge in today's world," Scarlett said. "I believe all Americans should be proud that, as a nation, we had the will and the ability to protect and restore this symbol of the wild."

Grizzly bears are hard to protect because they may roam a great deal, making it difficult to track them. Grizzlies, which are the largest of the bear species, are [omnivores](#), meaning that they eat vegetation as well as meat. Their diet may consist of roots, grass, berries, fruits, fish, [carrion](#), small mammals, and, in some areas, larger mammals such as moose, elk, and caribou. The grizzly bear's territory depends on the concentration of food sources in an area. If there is little food, a grizzly may roam over 500 square miles. If food is not scarce, however, a grizzly may need just over one square mile to support itself.

Supporters of the delisting, which include some environmental groups, say that the grizzly bear is an example of an endangered species comeback. Some supporters, such as Senator Mike Enzi of Wyoming, say that the delisting is long overdue. Senator Enzi and his allies maintain that state officials or private landowners, and not the federal government, should be responsible for species whose populations appear to be on the

mend. The grizzly is one of them.

"At long last," said Enzi, referring to the grizzly's comeback. "Decades passed. The bears increased in number. The federal government stood immobile. Today, that is finally changing. Grizzly management will shift to the state [level] where it should be."

Not everyone supports the delisting, however. Opponents point out that several factors still threaten grizzlies, including land development, oil and gas drilling, logging, and road building. Removing some grizzlies from the endangered species list loosens restrictions on all of these activities. It may also give rise to laws that allow people to hunt the bears.

Given these threats, opponents of the delisting are attempting to have the Yellowstone grizzlies placed back on the endangered list. Immediately following the delisting, over 250 scientists and researchers sent a letter of protest to the federal government. They questioned whether the grizzly population is large enough to withstand ongoing threats. The Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental group, said it plans to sue the government or protest Congress to stop the delisting.

"We cannot take a risk with the nation's premier wild land species," said Michael Scott, executive director of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which issued the final ruling on whether to delist the grizzly, is also considering whether to delist gray wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains, along with some bald eagles.

Fish and Wildlife officials say that although the Yellowstone grizzlies will no longer be protected under the Endangered Species Act, federal and state agencies will continue to monitor the bears. The total amount the agencies spend to do this will increase by more than \$1 million per year over the next two years to a total of \$3.7 million annually.

There are about 1,000 plant and animal species on endangered or threatened lists. About 20 species have been delisted because their populations grew stronger; nine have been removed because they became extinct.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

Dictionary

carrion (*noun*)

dead animals

omnivore (*noun*)

an animal that eats both animal and plant foods

predator (*noun*)

an animal that hunts another animal

Yellowstone (*noun*)

a park covering parts of Wyoming, Montana, and

National Park

Idaho, run by the federal government

Related Links:

[Learn more about grizzly bears.](#)

[Learn more about the Endangered Species Act.](#)

**Instructions:**

Select the letter of the correct answer.

Question 1:

What is the cause and effect relationship that takes place in the article?

- ☐ Since the grizzly population in Alaska has grown, the bears may become a national symbol.
- ☐ Since the grizzly population around Yellowstone has grown, some officials say that the bears no longer need protection.
- ☐ Since the grizzly population in Alaska has grown, the bears may need to roam over larger areas.
- ☐ Since the grizzly population around Yellowstone has grown, some officials say that the bears may be hard to track.

Question 2:

The best alternate headline for this article would be _____.

- ☐ Yellowstone Grizzly Bears Still Starving
- ☐ Yellowstone Grizzly Bears Move to Alaska
- ☐ Yellowstone Grizzly Bears No Longer Protected
- ☐ Yellowstone Grizzly Bears Hunted to Extinction

Question 3:

Which of the following best summarizes what opponents of delisting grizzly bears think?

- ☐ Americans should be proud that the grizzly bear population has been protected and restored.
- ☐ Even though the grizzly population has increased, it is not yet large enough to withstand threats.
- ☐ Americans should be proud that the grizzly bear population is now large enough to sustain itself.
- ☐ Even though the grizzly population has increased, private landowners

☹ should protect the species.

Question 4:

Which of these is a statement of opinion?

- ☐ Grizzly bears are omnivores that feed on vegetation and meat.
- ☐ Grizzly bears are large predators, and they often roam to find food.
- ☐ Grizzly bears are found in and around Yellowstone National Park.
- ☐ Grizzly bears are exciting to watch, but they are hard to protect.

Question 5:

The article states:

The grizzly bear's territory depends on the *concentration* of food sources in an area.

Which of the following is a synonym for the word *concentration*, as it is used in this sentence?

- ☐ Accumulation
- ☐ Anatomy
- ☐ Advocate
- ☐ Attention

Question 6:

Which question is **not** answered by the article?

- ☐ How many years ago was the Yellowstone grizzly bear listed as endangered?
- ☐ What caused the population of Yellowstone grizzly bears to decline?
- ☐ How many grizzlies are estimated to be around Yellowstone now?
- ☐ What makes Yellowstone grizzly bears hard to track?

Question 7:

Which is the closest synonym for *carrion*?

- ☐ Horde

- ☐ Siphon
- ☐ Trophy
- ☐ Carcass

Question 8:

The article states:

"We cannot take a risk with the nation's premier wild land species," said Michael Scott, executive director of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition.

The author's purpose for including this quote was to _____.

- ☐ Describe the feeding patterns of the grizzly
- ☐ Present an environmentalist's point of view
- ☐ Analyze the decline of the grizzly population
- ☐ Explain the protection status of endangered animals

**THOUGHT QUESTION**

Look back at today's article. Describe all of the events related to the grizzly bears, in the order that they occurred. Then, explain what you think might happen to grizzly bears in the future.

Use details from the article to support your answer.

Type your answer in the text box below.



Do you think delisting the Yellowstone grizzlies is the right thing for the government to do?

- ☐ Yes, because the grizzlies are no longer in danger
- ☐ No, because there are still many threats to grizzlies

**Instructions:**

Select the letter of the correct answer.

Question 1:

A grizzly bear needs an area of 500 square miles over which to roam. Assume the grizzly roams over a square-shaped area. What is the length of one side of this area?

- ☐ 5 $\sqrt{10}$ miles
- ☐ 5 $\sqrt{2}$ miles
- ☐ 10 $\sqrt{5}$ miles
- ☐ 4 $\sqrt{25}$ miles